

CHALLENGE



THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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MAY DAY 2020

CHICAGO



OAKLAND



LOS ANGELES



NEWARK, NJ, May 2—It is difficult for workers to organize as a result of the current pandemic, but it's not impossible. So how do we move forward and continue celebrating May Day? This year in Newark, we organized our first ever May Day motorcade in the Black and Latin working class neighborhoods where Progressive Labor Party's (PLP) we are deeply rooted, to express the communist line "The Only Solution Is A Communist Revolution!"

"Capitalism is the Disease! Communism is the Cure!" That was the theme of this motorcade and was used as a slogan to sharpen struggle with workers and students amidst a deadly pandemic that has already killed close to 10,000 workers in NJ and disproportionately affects Black, Latin and women workers in Newark and around the world (NJ.com, 5/9). For the 25 PLers and friends that joined, by car, on bikes and through Zoom, it was as exhilarating as it was a learning experience.

Communists lead class struggle

Unlike other reformist motorcades around immigration and rent strikes that took place downtown, PLP not only brought our politics to the Black and Latin neighborhoods of Newark where we have a base but called out capitalism for exacerbating this virus and incited workers to unite as the cure. Workers along the sidewalks raised their fists, cars beside us honked their horns in response to PLP's communist politics displayed along the cars and antiracist, antisexist mes-

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JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL FIGHT FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

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OUR FIGHT

- ★Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.
- ★The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today’s world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.
- ★Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world’s workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.
- ★While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim “communism is dead,” capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.
- ★Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society’s benefits and burdens.
- ★Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of “race.” Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.
- ★Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.
- ★Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.
- ★Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion’s false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.
- ★Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

CHALLENGE is for the working class, produced by the working class. The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP’s criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a “following” around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual’s writing of an article.

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Editorial

Oil tensions aggravate U.S. splits and imperialist rivals

Oil is the capitalist rulers’ most vital industrial and military commodity. Since World War I and the breakup of the Ottoman Empire, it has kept tanks moving, planes bombing, and factories exploiting workers’ labor. Time and again, the bosses have gone to war for control over oil in the Middle East, from the Suez Crisis to the Persian Gulf and Iraq wars. So it’s no surprise that the recent crash in oil prices has aggravated tensions among competing imperialist powers, moving them that much closer to all-out global war.

Capitalist overproduction, geared for the capitalists’ never-ending dogfight for maximum profit, is fundamentally irrational and chaotic. Even when oil demand dropped off a cliff with the Covid-19 pandemic, companies still had to keep pumping the commodity out of the ground. In April, with buyers scarce and global storage facilities near capacity, a barrel of oil briefly had a negative price—producers had to pay buyers to take it off their hands! As of mid-May, crude oil prices were still at a 20-year low.

In the communist, borderless future that members and friends of Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fight every day to secure, energy production will be centered around the needs and safety of workers. Decisions about when and where and how much to produce will be based not on profit or imperialist competition, but on what’s best for the international working class.

Split in the fascist U.S. ruling class

The economic misery enveloping the world, deepened by the crash in oil prices, has sharpened a split within the U.S. ruling class. The Small Fascists, who support and fund President Donald Trump, are aligned with domestic energy companies at mortal risk from plummeting demand. Two of these companies, Whiting Petroleum and Chesapeake Energy, have already filed for bankruptcy, and hundreds more may follow (Quartz, 4/3). Many of them produce oil by the costly “fracking” of shale deposits, and were already drowning in debt. From 2006 to 2014, 16 publicly traded shale oil companies outspent what they produced by more than \$80 billion (New York Times, 4/20). “At current prices, not one of the 100 largest fracking operations in the country can turn a profit” (Quartz, 4/3).

The bosses of these companies are mobilizing Trump’s racist “Make America Great Again” (MAGA) base in a desperate attempt to save their profits. The American Legislative Exchange Council (backed by the Small Fascist Koch family) and the Michigan Freedom Fund (linked to the Small Fascist DeVos family) have organized gun-toting protests at state capitols. They’re demanding an immediate reopening of local economies, even as thousands of people are infecting one another and dying of Covid-19 every day.

While the heavily armed white demonstrators with swastikas, nooses, and Confederate flags are repulsive, the other side in this fight is no friend of the working class. The liberal Big Fascists, who trace their origin to John D. Rockefeller and his Standard Oil monopoly, are spearheaded by multinational oil and finance capital companies. To protect their long-term profits, they are pushing for a slower emergence from the pandemic lockdown. Since deep-pocketed giants like ExxonMobil are better equipped to wait out a price squeeze than smaller domestic companies (Motley Fool, 4/27), they can pretend to care about workers’ health while they watch their competition wither and die.

In fact, the Big Fascists and their liberal politician puppets are planning for even deadlier, wider-scale wars with global rivals China and possibly Russia. Let us not be fooled. None of the bosses or their stooges—from Trump to Joe Biden and Barack Obama—care about workers’ lives. They simply have different strategies for how we should be sacrificed on the altar of capitalist profits.

Oil crash roils geopolitics

The Petrostates crash

The crash in oil prices is devastating the less powerful “petrostates,” nations that rely on petroleum revenue to run their economies. In Iraq, oil revenues—which make up 90 percent of budgetary income—plunged by nearly half for March, even before Covid-19 fully crushed demand. “This fiscal collapse has dire implications for the country’s struggle to stave off ISIS, for Iraq’s ability to stand up to interference by its neighbors...” (Bloomberg, 4/29). After sinking trillions of dollars and murdering hundreds of thousands of Iraqi workers in the genocidal Iraq War, the U.S. may have no more control over the region than it did before its invasion in 2003.

In fact, according to the International Monetary Fund, every country in the Middle East except Qatar requires oil to sell at a minimum of \$60 per barrel. Over the past month, the average price of Brent Crude has been a hair above \$20 (Bloomberg, 4/29).

ket with millions of additional barrels of oil. Republican Senator Ted Cruz suggested that Saudi Arabia, a once-reliable U.S. partner, was intentionally driving U.S. shale oil producers out of business (CNBC, 3/31).

Accelerated by the isolationist and incompetent Trump, the U.S. rulers’ loss of influence in the Middle East, even with so-called allies like Saudi Arabia and Israel, is a clear sign of their decline as the world’s number-one power. As China and Russia seek to fill the void, the region is becoming even more unstable. The twin crises of overproduction and the falling rate of profit, which Karl Marx showed to be inherent properties of capitalism, are intensifying imperialist competition. For the bosses, there is one sure-fire way to resolve their contradiction: a war that demolishes much of the world’s productive capacity. In other words, the bosses will gladly sacrifice the lives of millions of workers to “reset” their crisis-riddled system and start fresh.

Communists understand that capitalism can’t ever be reformed to meet the needs of our class. The profit system must be completely destroyed and replaced with one that’s run by and for the working class—a system that CAN meet our needs.

Main rivals on the rise

The two main challengers to U.S. dominance could emerge from this crisis stronger than before. U.S. sanctions against Russian oil forced Russia to diversify its economy, leaving it “in very good shape to cope with lower [oil] prices” (Bloomberg, 3/6). China, a net importer of oil, generally fares better when prices are low. Further, the Chinese government willingly supports its national oil companies to keep them solvent.

Combined with the economic disaster of the pandemic, the latest conflict over oil could accelerate the U.S. bosses’ decline and make them all the more eager to enlist U.S. workers for World War III. On April 28, the U.S. sent the guided-missile destroyer USS Barry to sail near the Paracel Islands, a disputed archipelago in the contested South China Sea. Two days later, the U.S. flew two Air Force B-1B bombers over the South China Sea in a provocative show of force.

Oil greases the wheels of global capitalism. As long as they remain in power, the bosses will continue to send millions of workers to fight and die to protect the rulers’ profits. They will keep on burning oil and other carbon-based fuels, the source of catastrophic climate change. For the workers of the world, there is only one alternative: communist revolution. Only when we have wiped the capitalists and their murderous system from the face of the planet will we be safe from their plunder, pandemics, depressions, and oil wars. Join PLP and help make revolution a reality! ✪

★MAY DAY 2020★

LOS ANGELES, May 1—“When they say get back, we say fight back!” The coronavirus is causing some of the most horrific attacks on the international working class that we have seen in decades. Yet in the spirit of fightback against this racist profit system, Progressive Labor Party (PLP) here organized a 25-car-strong motorcade to celebrate May Day 2020. While practicing the proper health measures, we were determined to find a way to honor the revolutionary history of May Day and be a beacon of light for our class. The fight against capitalism must continue no matter what external conditions may exist!

Workers take to the streets by any means (safely) necessary

We protested with a motorcade through Inglewood and Los Angeles that included three rallying points symbolic of our fight. As cars filed in to the meet up location, they received packets with maps and information on protesting while maintaining covid-precautions. We decorated our sound truck and leading car with red flags, signs opposing racist gentrification, and a 6-foot banner commemorating Alex Flores and the fight against racist police that we have used in our Flores Friday marches. Cars were also adorned with signs like “Capitalism Kills.” We were covered by masks and gloves yet the spirit of May Day was all around us.

Supporters came from many areas of work outside of the Flores family struggle and tenants work including high school teachers and students, healthcare workers and those involved in a local jail fight. Chants rang from our sound truck which set the tone that on May 1st, the international working class will fight back! Led by two PLP members and the sister of Alex Flores, we made our way to the first rallying point. The first target was an apartment building that was being deliberately allowed to deteriorate by the landlord because it sits in the shadow of the massive Rams football sta-

LOS ANGELES

dium being built across the street, the unmistakable symbol of racist gentrification. As our chants, “racism means... gentrification means, we got to fight back” rang out, passersby and cars driving by raised their fist or chanted in support!

Speakers called out the landlord by name, describing their horrible living conditions, including an immigrant worker and tenant we are working with who have a history of celebrating May Day in Mexico. The sister of Alex Flores, who has been fighting against the racist police murder of her brother for the last six months, gave a sobering speech about the role of police in our society. A comrade called for those fighting racist police murders and gentrification to join Progressive Labor Party and fight for a communist world. He offered a moving metaphor asking those listening to think about “contact tracing” (a method to contact those who could be spreading an infectious disease). Listeners were asked to apply that logic over the last 500 years to the source of all ills, whether it be unemployment, police murder, gentrification, or imperialist war, back to capitalism.

As we left Inglewood and entered Los Angeles, we received massive support from workers in front of their homes, walking down the street or driving by in their cars. The working class of South Central is clearly fed up with ridiculously high rents, killer cops, and many other aspects of capitalism.

Uniting mass work on May Day

In preparation, Progressive Labor Party united the work within a tenants’ mass organization with the fight we’ve organized with the Flores family against racist police murder (see CHALLENGE, 4/15). Our theme for May Day 2020 was commu-

nism is the solution to a capitalist system that kills workers in our homes and in the streets.

We connected these struggles politically in the planning meetings. For example, in one of the meetings, a PLP member stressed how the police are used to oppress the working class whether it be through physical violence in the streets or the sheriff’s department evicting families from their homes. A friend from the tenant’s organization wanted a particularly heinous landlord and the broader issue of gentrification to also be included in the list of targets. The proposal was for May Day to call for the cancellation of rent and to abolish the police with the understanding that we can only do this by smashing capitalism.

The fight for Flores lives on

The third leg of the motorcade took us to the neighborhood of Alex Flores where we have been protesting weekly for the last six months. An entire family on a small street jumped and screamed in their front yard as we passed by. We coursed through the neighborhood, taking small streets that we had been canvassing over the last couple of weeks and passed the corner where another person was killed less than two weeks ago by LAPD after a car chase. We have yet to get in contact with anyone from their family at this point. We continued to Newton police station, where we have marched every Friday since November, ending on a spirited note.

From start to finish, it was four hours long, longer than anticipated. Unfortunately, this meant that many people left the motorcade before getting to the end. Nevertheless, we pulled off a major feat by seizing the streets in this period of “sheltering at home” and stretching clear across the city, connecting two key struggles. It was clear that workers are receptive and are searching for answers. We must continue to build the fight for a communist world!✳

NEWARK

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sages blasting from our speakers. We remixed popular songs from classic May Day chants, “The workers united will never be defeated! Who are we? PLP! Raise those red flags, raise them high, PLP is marching by! La migra, la policia, La misma porqueria. Same enemy, same fight, workers of the world unite.”

Along the route, comrades stopped at lights or would slow down to sell CHALLENGE through windows while wearing masks and gloves to protect themselves and others. At the end of the route we entered the Stephen Crane Village Apartments, a public housing unit consisting of Black, Latin workers, and students. While teens ran to one of the car windows to take a CHALLENGE, the front of our Motorcade for Communism was met with a police motorcade for capitalism. “No good cops in a racist system” we chanted while facing a potential confrontation with the growing state’s fascist police.

Preparations and practice for class war

PLP and workers from the Newark Water Coalition collectively made a plan for the route, flyers, translations, posters, chants and who to contact if the racist cops started to make any arrests. For those who were unable to join, they followed the motorcade via Zoom. Some comrades and friends also rode on bikes beside the motorcade to be on the lookout for fascist pigs who would take any reason to dis-



rupt working class fightback.

The route, practiced the week before by two comrades, included residential streets, a supermarket, two low-income housing units, and two hospitals. Flyers in both English and Spanish were passed out along the streets of Ivy Hill and North Newark where we’ve been organizing for decades and hung up on poles days prior to May Day. Cars were suited up with communist signs about the racist nature of this pandemic and some comrades even taped the front page of our May Day—Workers Day issue of CHALLENGE to their cars.

Preparing for this motorcade for May Day was useful to boost the morale of PL’ers, friends and workers alike—we acknowledged the dangers of the pandemic while still encouraging each other to push the limits of a disastrous capitalist crisis in order to move us toward a worker-led revolution.

A communist world is essential

This may be a dangerous time for many reasons - but there is great opportunity as well. Workers are angry, the fascist underbelly of capitalism is even more exposed and it is up to us to struggle against reactionary ideas. Having collectivized historical analysis, lessons from years of fighting back and most importantly, the potential of an angry working class hungry to fight to win, building for a communist world is essential. The motorcade showed how workers along the march were happy to see and hear communist ideas put forward by a multi-racial, multi-generational group of protestors in cars and on bikes. Join the fight for our world, not run for profits for the bosses, but run by the working class, for the working class!✳

★WORKERS' DAY 2020★

CHICAGO



CHICAGO, May 2—Close to 50 multiracial Progressive Labor Party (PLP) comrades and friends gathered at a park on the city’s west side today, to celebrate International Workers Day. Proudly waving red flags, revolutionary banners and signs, we proclaimed to the masses our communist messages of antiracism, antisexism, internationalism and workers’ power.

Hardly a month and a half ago, our collective was unsure if we would be able to host our annual May Day celebration this year, because of the health risks posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. But collectivity, organization, and communist boldness go a long way. Today’s success shows how we continue to adapt and put our revolutionary line into practice in creative and inspiring ways.

As the racist pandemic continues to devastate workers the world over, the revolutionary spirit of May Day and need for organizing a mass PLP are as essential as ever. We are proud to carry on the generations of communist struggle represented by International Workers Day, and build the lifelong fight for a borderless world!

This is our time!

A handful of comrades arrived early at the rally site to begin preparing for our physically distanced demonstration. Along the points of the sidewalk and grass we measured out distances of six feet, and placed red flags in the ground to mark the space. N95 masks were available to everyone who participated. We decorated nearby bus stops, trees, and light posts with banners and red balloons. Using chalk, we wrote revolutionary communist slogans in large letters on the sidewalk.

As soon as the stage was safely set, we jumped right into our program. A veteran comrade kicked off the celebration by giving a brief history of May Day, including its origins and its true meaning as a communist holiday celebrated all over the world.

A total of five speeches were given, in both Spanish and English, delivered mostly by younger comrades. A spoken word piece written by a comrade working in health care blasted racist capitalism’s priorities of money and profit at all costs, over workers’ lives.

A college student comrade called out the bosses in Chicago for blowing up a toxic coal plant in a Latin working-class neighborhood recently, which covered much of the area in dust in the middle of the pandemic. She stressed the racist double standard and criminalization by the state of Black, Latin, and immigrant workers who are fighting to survive despite the system’s deadly neglect.

Two speeches completely in Spanish came next. The first was from a comrade who has long led struggles in public schools in a majority immigrant worker neighborhood. She detailed the racist response and treatment from Chicago Public Schools in how they are continuing their legacy of racist failure in “educating” working-class youth during the stay-at-home order. Another comrade condemned the racist death sentence handed down from the bosses to immigrant workers in concentration camps, and contrasted how a communist world based on workers’ needs would handle a pandemic far differently.

For the keynote speech, a teacher comrade reflected on his experiences years ago in Ferguson, Missouri after the murder of Mike Brown by racist cop Darren Wilson. As the capitalist bosses ramp up their fascist attacks during the pandemic, he reminded everyone present that “this is our time” and for all comrades to “pick up your gun” and step up for the fights to come.

Up to and including the point where PLP and workers violently take state power from the capitalists, our political ideas are our strongest weapons. The comrade correctly stated that each CHALLENGE that we put in another worker’s hands, each study group that we hold, every walk-out or strike we help organize is a shot fired at the capitalist class.

We wrapped up our rally by singing the communist anthem “The Internationale” in Spanish and English. To finish, our caravan of over 20 cars enthusiastically navigated through working-class neighborhoods around the west side. Many workers who saw the procession pumped their fists in salute and came up to the cars to receive copies of CHALLENGE, of which we handed out over 100 copies!

May Day means workers’ power!

As the crises of capitalism intensify, the international working class and our Party are presented with many dangers, but also with many opportunities. The celebration of May Day must serve as a vibrant reminder of our own multiracial unity as workers, collective power, and potential to transform the world through communist revolution. The words first spoken over a century ago still ring true today: Workers of the world, unite! We have nothing to lose but our chains!✊

BROOKLYN

BROOKLYN, May 1—May Day greetings to the international working class! One hundred and sixty five members and friends of the Progressive Labor Party (PLP) joined a lively May Day Zoom celebration hosted by our high school club. The celebration began with a slide show and video celebrating past May Days in honor of our fallen comrade Joan Heymont. While our usual May Day celebration, which consists of familiar chants and beats down Flatbush Avenue accompanied by enthusiastic responses from the community, was disrupted by the global coronavirus pandemic, it did not stop PLP from celebrating the international workers holiday.

May Day is the celebration of the working class. It is a reminder of the need to bridge our demands together to collectively fight for communism. A society run by workers and for workers. The working class produces everything of value and should rightfully receive the benefits of our labor. Collectively, we can determine how to share what we produce, according to need. We have no need for the blood-sucking bosses who steal the value of our labor through wage slavery. The coronavirus is an opportunity for bosses to increase their power but also for workers to fight back and build a world worthy of us. Only hard work on our part will guarantee



that we will win.

The main speaker, a young Black woman from Newark, New Jersey, talked about the Party’s response to the Covid-19 pandemic, showing how a communist world, where we rely on each other instead of bosses, could be possible. PLP and friends have been creating mutual aid groups around food, shelter and resources. Teachers have gone into overtime as additional full time therapists for their students and parents. Members of PLP in Haiti, LA and Chicago are still finding innovative ways to physically distance themselves while protesting for more workers to fight for a world without police violence, prisons and exploitation.

A nurse from a Brooklyn hospital spoke about the need for solidarity to counter the bosses’ greed. She spoke about the anger she feels knowing that the government has chosen wealth over health, “Right now, only the bosses are winning. The president wants us all to return to work because at the end of the day, he’s a businessman in this capitalist world we live in. What we really need to do is make these bosses take the losses.”

MEXICO

MEXICO, May 1—This year, the Progressive Labor Party (PLP) collectives in Mexico met to commemorate a virtual May Day because of the Covid-19 pandemic. We met with comrades and friends from Mexico City, Oaxaca, and two collectives from the State of Mexico, as well as friends from Argentina and Colombia. We were able to analyze the health crisis and the impact it has had on workers worldwide. What is prevailing is the inequality generated by capitalism and its profit system. The situation worldwide is similar because it is governed by a system that does not care about people’s lives. We flew the flag of communism and the need to create and continue working in an international party. Since, under this system, the life of any worker, no matter their job, is not guaranteed.

We made an urgent appeal to not miss the opportunity to join the fight against this capitalist caused pandemic. Working from our respective trenches, we can build a communist party. We also called on women, men, and youth to fight shoulder to shoulder from anywhere in the world to achieve a revolutionary communist army, where life will be the priority✊

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Caravan against reinstatement of racist killer cops!

HYATTSVILLE, MD, May 4—Today a bold car caravan rally, organized by Community Justice (CJ), protested the reinstatement of six killer cops to the Hyattsville police force. Twenty cars carrying 30 people, adorned with militant signs against racist police brutality rolled several times around the police station. Progressive Labor Party (PLP) members participated in planning this event, calling attention to the way the racist capitalist system systematically terrorizes and intimidates the working class, leaving us no choice but to organize for communist revolution!

Drivers honked their horns continuously as we circled police headquarters. Rebellious music (“Momma momma, Can’t You See”, “Fight the Power”, “They Don’t Care about Us”), blared from a loudspeaker, and a CJ spokesperson vehemently condemned the police and the political leaders of Hyattsville as the caravan stopped briefly in front of the police station.

What sparked this protest was the decision by the Hyattsville police chief, endorsed by the city administrator and unopposed by the mayor and city council, to reinstate cops who murdered Leonard Shand last October. Ten cops from three jurisdictions surrounded Shand and killed him in a hail of bullets like a firing squad (see CHALLENGE, 11/6/2019).

Since then, Shand’s family, CJ, PLP members, and other community organizations have demanded accountability for this heinous racist crime. Instead, we have been met with a pro-cop narrative from Mayor Candice Hollingsworth, Police Chief Amal Awad, and now City Administrator Tracey Douglas. They are justifying the killing, saying that “no violations of internal policy” have been found (Route 1 Reporter, 5/5). These three misleaders are Black women, showing that nationalism or feminism won’t lead us to liberation.

We need working-class unity for communist revolution. All politicians serve only the needs of capitalism, whatever their personal identity and rhetoric. We can only rely on the rank-and-file of the working class to advance our struggle for



liberation! Strikingly, Awad and Douglas made this decision while the formal investigation of these cops by the Prince George’s Police Department (PGPD) and the States Attorney for the Shand murder has not yet been completed.

These Hyattsville political leaders are providing a pre-emptive, de facto exoneration of these killers! Not that workers expect justice from the PGPD investigation. After all, that department harbors cops like those who murdered William Green (see CHALLENGE, 2/17/2019 and Washington Post, 10/23/2019). PGPD has been subject to two federal consent decrees from the U.S. Department of Justice for unconstitutional policing, and still

conducts racist intimidation, assaults, and murders.

As CJ rightly continues to escalate its demands for accountability, PLP members will continue to participate, while calling on all workers to join the long term fight for real justice that can only come from toppling the capitalist system. That system needs racist terror and intimidation to keep the working class divided, exploited, and disarmed. Building multi-racial, revolutionary unity in the long term battle for a communist, egalitarian, anti-racist society is the key to our final victory over this inhumane, racist capitalist system.✚

May Day: Brooklyn School for Communism

Continued from page 4

She emphasized that solidarity is the key component needed to turn this crisis around.

The bosses have not only failed the working class by offering limited aid from their inadequate health care system, but have also displayed their lack of regard for students’ education. A new member highlighted the role teachers must play during this pandemic,

“Communists today in PLP fight to learn and learn to fight, and in this crisis that means providing our students opportunities to confront the failures of capitalism.

The working class needs not only the vaccine against Covid-19, but also the vaccine against capitalism. That vaccine is communist revolution.” The ruling class is committed to perpetuating anti-communist propaganda into the education system to ensure students do not discover that the cure for their suffering is the eradication of capitalism and replacing it with communism. Young people are the future and it is the job of adults to ensure they understand how deadly capitalism is. It is important to take time during this pandemic to weave politics into lessons, regardless of the subject.

The poem “Good Morning Revolution” by Langston Hughes was performed by the high school club and “Home” by Warsan Shire was read by two teachers and dedicated to immigrant and refugee students around the world:

*You have to understand,
that no one would put their*



*children in a boat
unless the sea is safer than the land
no one burns their palms under trains
beneath carriage no one spends days
and nights in the stomach of a truck
feeding on newspaper
unless the miles travelled
means something more than journey.*

Life for workers under capitalism will never be sustainable. However, under communism, profit will never be put before workers’ lives; in fact, there

will never be a profit incentive to begin with. All of our working class brothers and sisters will be treated equally and all racist borders will be smashed. We will unite as the working class and fight against this capitalist system for a better world. Nationalism is an anti-worker ideology that enables the imperialist rulers to exploit natural resources and cheap labor—and nationalism promotes war with other imperialists in competition for more profit.

Communists are internationalists because the working class is one international class, with a common class interest, under one red flag. This is the world PLP has fought for from our start. We will continue to fight until our class prevails.

We invite all workers to join this struggle—for ourselves, and for our children and grandchildren. Our vision for communism can be realized only with millions of workers and youth, with people just like you.

Our fight is sparked by class anger against the bosses and their viruses, killer kkkops, and all those who serve capitalism. But what sustains our communist movement is our working-class love—for industrial and domestic workers, for soldiers and students. United as one class, freed from exploitation and artificial borders, the working class can build a new world from the ashes of the old.

May Day is your chance to join Progressive Labor Party. Take the leap. And when you do, you will be joining hands with billions of fighters past, present, and future—with a historic movement of working-class struggle. The future belongs to us, but only if we dare to fight for it. Long live communism! Power to the workers!✚

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

Bronx: ‘Share the fire for justice’

The following are reflections from the City University of New York (CUNY) students in the Bronx about celebrating May Day 2020 with each other about how to fight the disease of capitalism.

It’s often easy to forget our innate right to resist, in a world meticulously designed to imprison the masses. Free will can seem like a distant myth. May Day is a beautiful reminder that resistance is our birthright. The survival of our families depends on our courage to resist. I am grateful to have been a part of the gathering and look ahead to a future that cares for all.

★

My first Labor Day with the communist movement was very different from any other May Day. Despite the new faces that were also part of this virtual conference, the joy and connection of the truth was evident. The truth was the one that through songs, dances and poems, we were able to share with each other the fight against the disease of capitalism. A disease that can only be cured with an injection of communism. On May 1st we celebrate not only the fight for workers’ rights but also to be part of the cure for a system of oppression that continues to keep the 99 percent down. We will rise up and proclaim freedom from unnecessary wars, social classes, racism, poverty and oppression. This past May Day the communist movement celebrated the cause of this struggle, we the workers.

★

May Day was an amazing experience. I got to meet people who shared the same fire and desire for justice. I was able to see the different and unique ways they share their message through their art. I’m also able to learn new terms such as “racial politics”. I also think that even though it was my first time I was able to participate. Even though this May Day was virtual, I hope the next May Day will be in person. This in person May Day might even top off the virtual May Day experience!

★

Red Greetings!

I participated in my first May Day 73 years ago. Our Party, having overcome any and all conditions in organizing for our international working-class holiday, I find that today’s march contains probably the biggest hurdle we’ve yet encountered in battling the virus of capitalism.

It’s great to realize that our Progressive Labor Party has won so many young people to fight for communism. Truly, you are the future.

On May Day, I celebrated my 90th birthday yesterday and our celebration is the happiest present I could receive!

HAPPY MAY DAY, comrades, and continue building our multiracial revolutionary communist Party!

★★★★★

We organized in the interest of students

Capitalist education has always failed working-class students, and right now the disaster of online learning shows that very clearly. In New York City, online classes began on March 23 and today there are still large numbers of students without devices that allow them to connect to their online classes, families with no wifi, families whose parents are essential workers so older children become the caretakers to younger children, teenagers working full time to support their families after layoffs, and children dealing with the illness and death of family members. But the Department of Education just keeps moving along, insisting on business-as-usual, just remotely. Disgustingly, some families have even had Children’s Services called on them because their children have been “absent” too many times!

Some teachers in my school have committed to NOT going with business-as-usual, and have moved away from our typical curriculum—to bring political discussion to our classes, exposing the racist, anti-working class nature of the ruling class’ response to Covid-19, to do our best to provide emotional support to our kids, and to help them find ways to fight back and fight for the schools they deserve.

One student decided to survey students about

whether remote learning was working or not working and shared with teachers a document with criticism and suggestions for improving the situation. She was later attacked by several other teachers for doing so, and some of us jumped to support her, and fought to keep the student’s voices in the picture. They had gotten to her and she wanted to quit, but with some struggle, she decided it was more important to make sure that student’s voices are heard.

We now have a small team of students and a few teachers producing a weekly newsletter being sent out to the whole school. It is a weekly update from student surveys about what’s working for them and what they need, links to news articles, as well as some fun things. Everything is determined by students, as they fight to shape what their learning environment is during this time. Moving forward, it will expand, keeping as its focus that students will fight to shape their school and that teachers & administrators should be listening, and that students can fight back against this racist, capitalist system.

★★★★★

Mexico: workers amidst a pandemic

Just like the rest of the working class, healthcare workers are insecure and have no rights, and they are the first to catch the virus due to the lack of personal protective equipment (PPE).

Here is the real “Achilles Heel” that can send us to the abyss and deepen the negative effects of the pandemic in Mexico.

The government talks about “leveling the curve” and “staying home” in order to contain the virus and prevent the collapse of the health system. When in reality there are other factors that can cause the collapse prematurely, but are not taken into account:

- 1) The lack of PPE for healthcare workers has seen an increase of cases in different hospitals in the country.
- 2) Several doctors’ and nurses’ protests and rallies denouncing the lack of safety and supplies, that could eventually lead to a series of “massive strikes” in hospitals.

In reality our health system collapsed long before Covid-19 appeared in our lives. Years and years of neglect, instability and privatization have translated into a lack of personnel and shortages in protection, medical equipment, and the lack of general supplies. That is what we had before the current medical emergency which has in turn made them one of the highest risk groups for infection.

The institutional rhetoric, mounted on this base, has transformed them into “heroes” and “heroines”, in other words, “the front-line soldiers” that must sacrifice for their “sisters, brothers and country”. Over the weeks the media, of course, and all social networks reproduce this discourse without analysis or criticism.

The government is happy with the rhetoric, as it scatters and distracts from the real issues. We suffer from the cuts in public health budgets, the deterioration of the infrastructure, and the lack of access to health services for most of the population. We need to stop “romanticizing” the precarious and risky conditions healthcare workers are forced to work under for the moment. Doctors, nurses and public health workers in our country are not heroes or heroines; they are workers that are being exposed, for decades to a series of political injustices, from low salaries to the lack of the most basic labor rights.

We must not forget that when these workers have fought for their rights they have been strongly repressed. So, instead of reproducing the discourse, we need to demand that the government immediately provide the supplies and infrastructure these workers need. It is the only way to save lives. And it is the best way to prevent the system from collapsing. The government could redistribute the funds for the mega projects like the Tren Maya or the Santa Lucia Airport, that, needless to say, should take a back seat to healthcare.

★★★★★

Virtual May Day in the midwest

I attended another Progressive Labor Party (PLP) May Day. This year it was virtual due to the coronavirus pandemic. We talked about how we all are fairing during this crisis. Later, we shared stories from our 1st May Day gatherings from years ago. There was also a

**CAPITALISM
BREEDS SEXISM
RACISM
& IMPERIALISM!**



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presentation on the class struggle as it emerged out of primitive communism to our 21st Century capitalist world. Also, we discussed how the global Covid pandemic will affect revolutionary work, and how it’s fascist to force meatpacking workers back to work to die by the bosses and president Trump in the name of profits. We discussed the need to be involved where there are workers and win them to join PLP.

It was also not lost on anyone how global capitalism is an artificial system of inequalities that took a virus to open the eyes of millions of workers globally that capitalism does not work for our class. We need to get out this message of communist revolution as the way out of this capitalist hell. We ended our Zoom gathering by singing the Internationale.

★★★★★

May Day has no borders!

BROOKLYN, NY May 1—For 50 years, Progressive Labor Party (PLP) has been carrying on the May Day tradition with marches in working class communities. We bring our revolutionary ideas to thousands of people who participate in or witness these marches.

Although we couldn't march this year in Brooklyn as we have in the past few years, a group of us organized in a different way. We contacted friends from work, community as well as family members to share our celebration. Our determination was to be able to share May Day with as many workers as possible. Our efforts resulted in our biggest May Day participation in years!

We collectively planned an event weaving together images of past PLP marches, the history of May Day's origins, and its revolutionary international character. PLP's commitment to the fight against racism was proudly showcased in our history, from our May Day march in Boston in 1975 against the fascist anti-busing movement, to our May Day march in Chicago against the Nazis and violent racists. More recently we marched here in Brooklyn along with family members of victims of racist police murders. We highlighted an inspiring example of the working class' fighting spirit during WWII. Jewish fighters with communist leadership found a way to celebrate May Day in the midst of their heroic armed struggle in Poland's Warsaw ghetto.

We heard a nurse give a detailed indictment of the failures of capitalist health care and their lack of preparation, and mistreatment of workers in the current Covid-19 pandemic. We noted the racist nature of capitalist medical care before and during this crisis. While many of our friends clearly see Donald Trump's failures, we pointed out the systemic racism and cuts that have occurred under both Democrats and Republicans. A former hospital worker pointed out the huge number of hospital closings and the decrease in total beds (20,000) and staff over the last 20 years in New York. No wonder the number of deaths are so high.

A report was made about the organizing work outside of the U.S. Our comrade detailed the efforts being made to collectively solve the life and death immediate needs of hunger, sanitary conditions



CAPITALISM IS THE VIRUS. COMMUNISM IS THE CURE.

and medication made worse during this pandemic. In the midst of these efforts the comrade explained how revolutionary communist ideas were connected to past and current problems and how a communist revolution is the only solution!

As a result of our May Day efforts, a number of the participants voiced interest in learning more about PLP's communist ideas in study/action groups.🗣️

Kkkops terrorize, wokers organize

Continued from page 8

the crowd, the kkkops gleefully unloaded several toxic pellet shots at protestors.

In defense, workers put their hands up and chanted, "hands up, don't shoot!" to no avail. Afterwards, PLP talked with people about how that plea won't gain sympathy from cops or the capitalist state that breeds them. It's their job to terrorize us. It's our job as communists to show this truth to our class sisters and brothers and grow our Party.

Unity with workers, not kkkops

When confronting the cops, politicians, or other capitalist institutions about their brutalization of the working class, we have to know that there is no rational dealing with them. Their goal is to stamp out all opposition to their vicious rule. Our goal is to build relationships with as many people as we can, toward building a mass communist party to smash the capitalist system.

Many times during the action, those within the mass organizations present tried to make deals with the cops for less harsh treatment of protestors. Members of our Party were approached to lead others to follow rules that cops laid out in exchange for a promise by them to leave one side of the street or lessen their violence towards the crowd. We rejected that bargaining tactic and supported the workers in heightening their opposition to this murderous system and the ongoing terror tactics cops used. We stood with our class as we stared down the cops and prevented more attacks by our united presence.

This tactic of attempting to bargain with cops



and holding them to their word is a fatal flaw for reform movements. The only people we can trust at these actions are other workers, and the clear agreed-upon leadership that is established.

The lack of this clear leadership was an additional liability to the action.

Learn to fight, fight to learn

The working class has proven time and again that we will not sit helplessly by as family and friends are killed and abused

by capitalists' henchmen. Members of our Party must continue to be a part of these fight-back actions. Our relationships with people in mass movements is what will be the difference in workers embracing our line in this fight, and will prevent workers from continuing to be misled by reformists and politicians who will only uphold the bosses' grasp on our throats. Fight the bosses and fight for communism!🗣️



SMASH RACIST KILLER KKKOPS



lead the action, distributed CHALLENGE, held deep conversations with workers about the roots of this capitalist terror, and continued to grow relationships. We carried signs that said “the only solution is communist revolution” and “racism means we got to fight back,” and ones that called for multiracial unity against cop killings.

When a member of PLP spoke on the bullhorn, they tied the state terrorism we all experience due to capitalism to the three recent deaths in the city. They led anti-capitalist chants and said our class has everything to gain from protesting this violence, and destroying this blood-soaked profit system.

A white protestor was targeted for arrest after they committed the “crime” of momentarily stepping off the curb into the street, being grabbed by cops.

When workers tried to pull them back into

Continued on page 7

INDIANAPOLIS, May 9—When Dreasjon Reed on May 21 was murdered by the police, the working class responded. A multiracial Progressive Labor Party (PLP) brought communist leadership to a protest action today. This action was organized by friends of Dreasjon and a local protest organization in the city.

Twenty-one year old Black worker Dreasjon Reed was gunned down by racist Indianapolis Metro Police Department officers. Reed was involved in a car chase with cops and at one point, left the car and ran from custody. Reports say that he exchanged gunfire with cops, who shot and murdered him.

The same day, kkkops murdered another Black worker in the city, 19 year old McHale Ross, as well as white worker Ashlynn Lisby, who was pregnant! This same weekend, workers across the country ran in the name of Ahmaud Arbery (25), killed by wannabe Klansmen for jogging while Black.

On an international level, workers continue to be overwhelmingly victimized by growing fascism. The instances of abuse and murder by cops are ongoing and increasing, while racist and class-based attacks continue in the form of the over-representation of the working class being infected and dying from Covid-19.

These abuses are related, as they are ongoing under a murderous capitalist system that makes examples of and continues to use our class as cannon fodder in order to maintain fear, control and profits. The difference between our Party and popular reform movements is our call for communist revolution and dismantling the capitalist system.

Bring the fight to killer cops, capitalism

A multiracial collection of fighters called for an end to cops lynching Black workers. Due to an internal struggle among protest groups in the city, there was no designated leadership present at the action. However, there were many people who were passionate about holding cops accountable for the continued racist victimization of the Black working class of Indianapolis.

Based on that desire, PLP helped



Communist Caravan vs. kkkops

BROOKLYN, May 12—A multiracial caravan of 12 called out the recent racist police shootings. They protested down Church Avenue that revisited the time-honored sites of protest against the police murders of Kyam Livingston, Shantel Davis, and Kimani Gray. Bus drivers, postal workers honked their horns in solidarity. Pedestrians raised the fists in the air. From Georgia to Indianapolis to Brooklyn, we need to fight racism (see article next issue).

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